

Chapter 4 Injection Drug Users

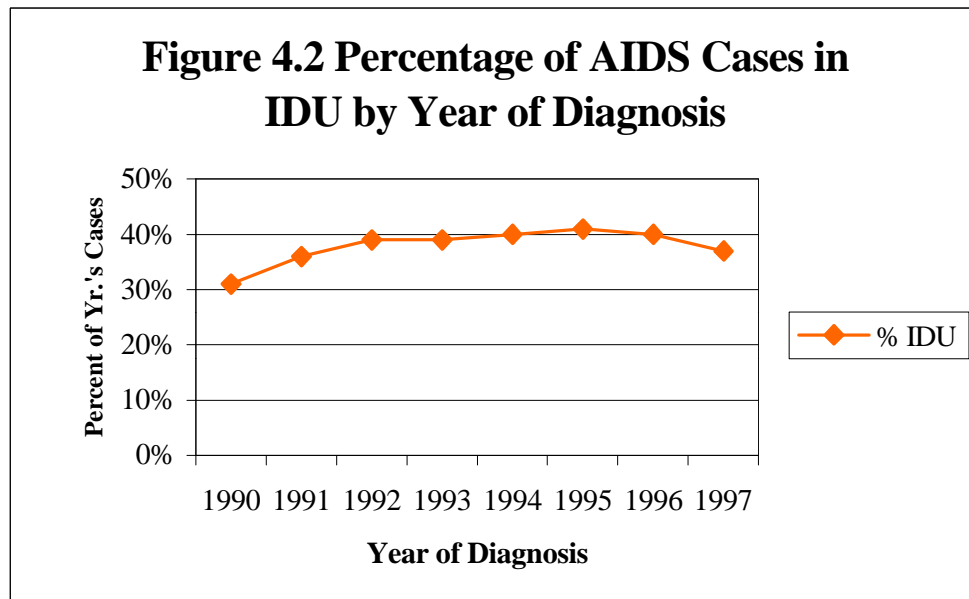
- Thirty percent of all alive IDU AIDS cases are women.
- People of color are disproportionately represented among alive IDU cases.
- Injecting drug users are more likely to engage in multiple risk behaviors than are non-injecting drug users.

Injection drug use, accounting for 37% of alive cases diagnosed in 1997, continues to be the most frequent single mode of HIV transmission in Massachusetts. Figure 4.1 gives a current look at the demographics of alive AIDS cases among injecting drug users.

Figure 4.1 Alive AIDS Cases with IDU as a risk behavior by Age Category, Sex, and Race/Ethnicity

Alive AIDS Cases (Alive as of 7/1/98) N=1,881	
Age Category	
0-12	0 (0%)
13-24	45 (2%)
25-44	1,605 (85%)
45+	231 (12%)
Sex	
Male	1339 (71%)
Female	542 (29%)
Race/Ethnicity	
White	717 (38%)
Black	493 (26%)
Hispanic	661 (35%)

In Massachusetts the epidemic among injection drug users emerged somewhat later than the MSM epidemic. Between 1990 and 1997, the percentage of cases attributable to injection drug usage rose from 31% of total cases in 1990 (N=328) to nearly 40% of total cases from 1992 (N=672) to 1996 (N=360). In 1997 (N=189), this percentage decreased somewhat, but some of this is almost certainly due to a differential reporting lag. Figure 4.2 illustrates this trend.



People of color are disproportionately represented among cases associated with injection drug use. Blacks and Hispanics combined account for 61% of alive cases attributable to injection drug use in Massachusetts. Individually, Blacks represent 26% and Hispanics 35% of total injecting drug use cases. Within each racial/ethnic group, men account for a far greater proportion of injection drug use AIDS cases. This fact is most dramatic among Hispanics where men account for more than three times the number of injection drug use AIDS cases as women.

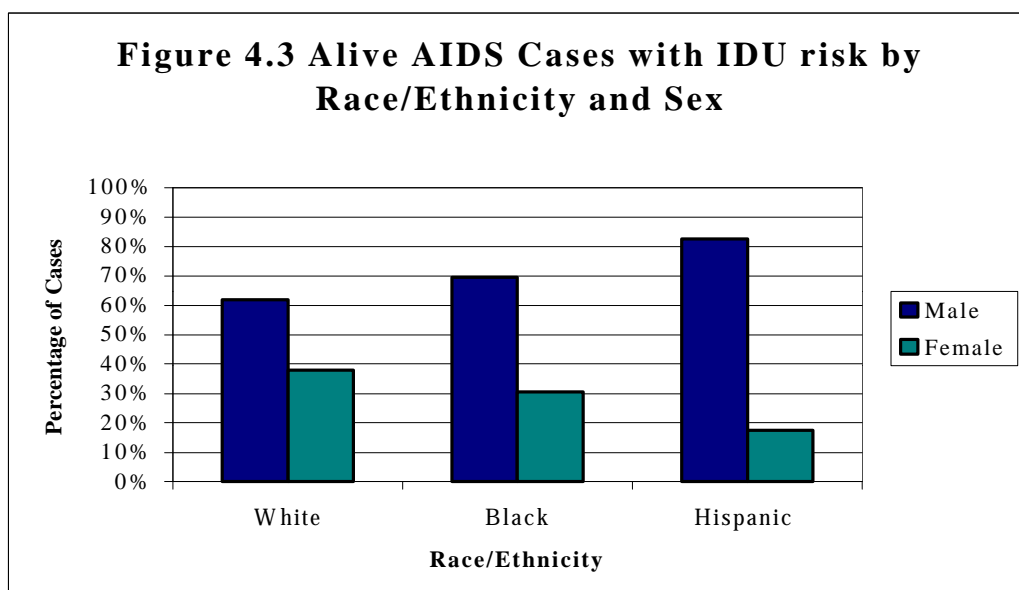


Figure 4.4 summarizes the number and percent of alive AIDS cases among injecting drug users by race/ethnicity and age category.

Figure 4.4 Alive IDU AIDS Cases by Age Category and Race/Ethnicity (Percentages refer to age category as % of Race/Ethnicity)						
Age	White		Black		Hispanic	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
13-24	18	(3%)	10	(2%)	16	(2%)
25-44	608	(85%)	395	(80%)	593	(90%)
45+	91	(13%)	88	(18%)	52	(8%)
Total	717		493		661	

AIDS case trends among injecting drug users are fairly consistent among health service regions. These trends are shown by regions in Figures 4.5 through 4.10. The following is a summary of information presented in these Figures.

- Hispanics account for the greatest number and percentage of IDU AIDS cases in the Western Region. There is a higher proportion of women among White injecting drug users with AIDS than among injecting drug users of color.
- Hispanic men account for the single greatest number of injecting drug use cases in the Western, Central and Northeast regions. White men account for the largest number of AIDS cases in injecting drug users in the Southeast and Metro West regions. Black men account for the greatest number of injecting drug use cases in the Boston region.
- In the Western region, Hispanic men account for nearly three times the cases of any other group.
- With the exception of the Central region where male and female IDU AIDS cases are evenly distributed among Whites and Blacks, men make up a far greater percentage of IDU cases than women.

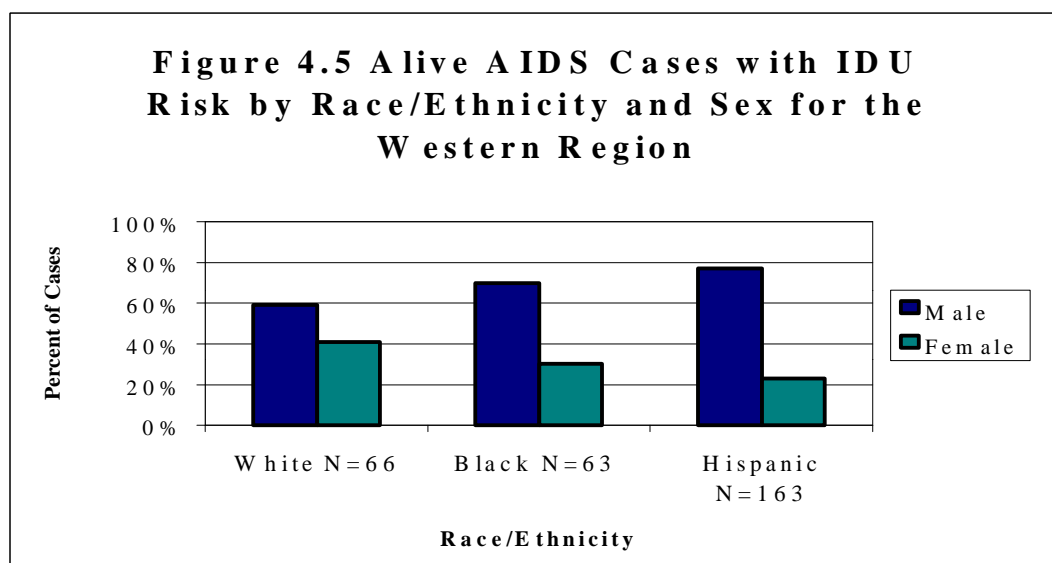


Figure 4.6 Alive AIDS Cases with IDU Risk by Race/Ethnicity and Sex for the Central Region

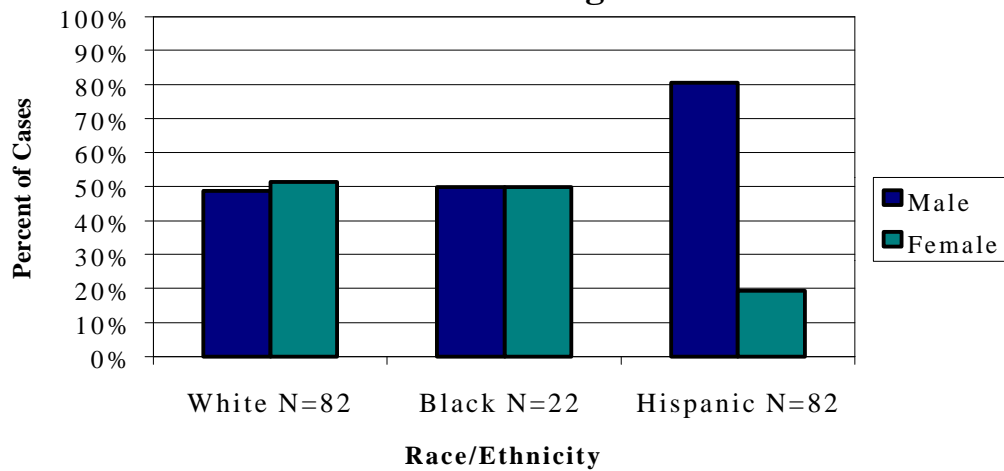


Figure 4.7 Alive AIDS Cases with IDU Risk by Race/Ethnicity and Sex for the Northeast Region

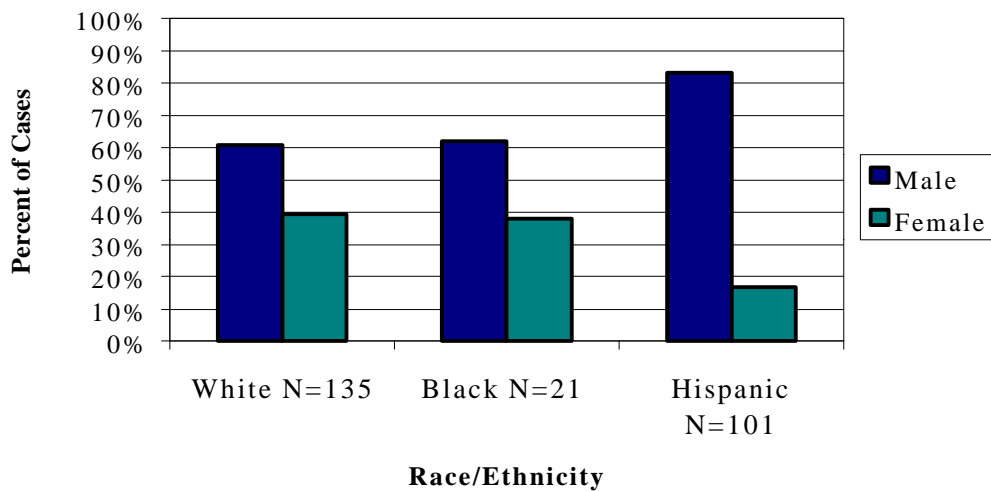


Figure 4.8 Alive AIDS Cases with IDU Risk by Race/Ethnicity and Sex for the Boston Region

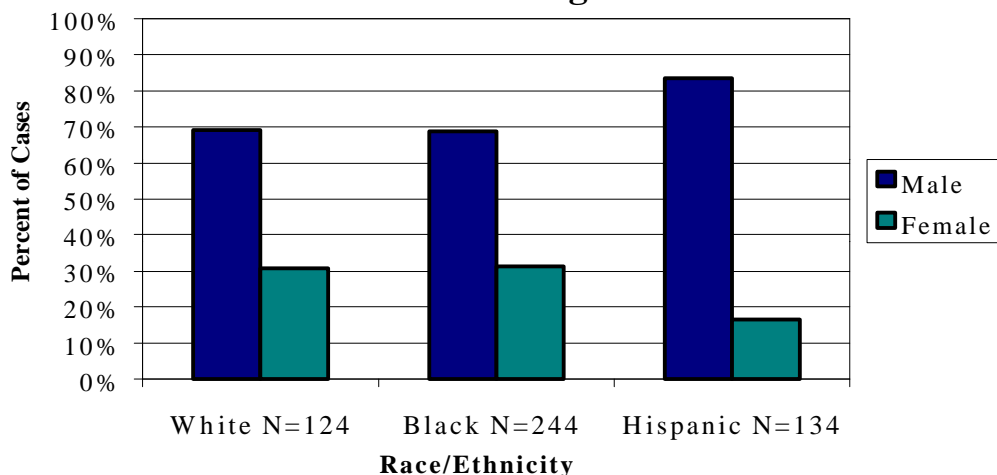
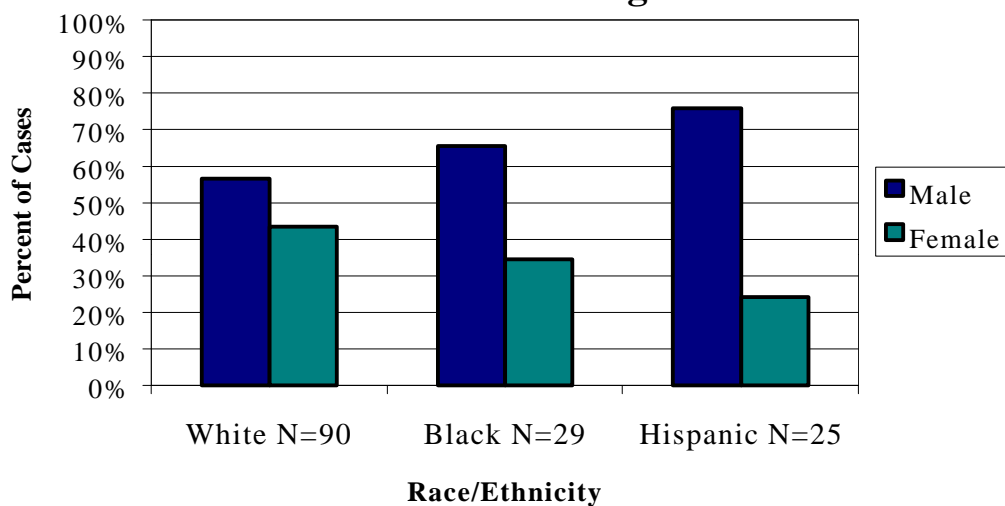
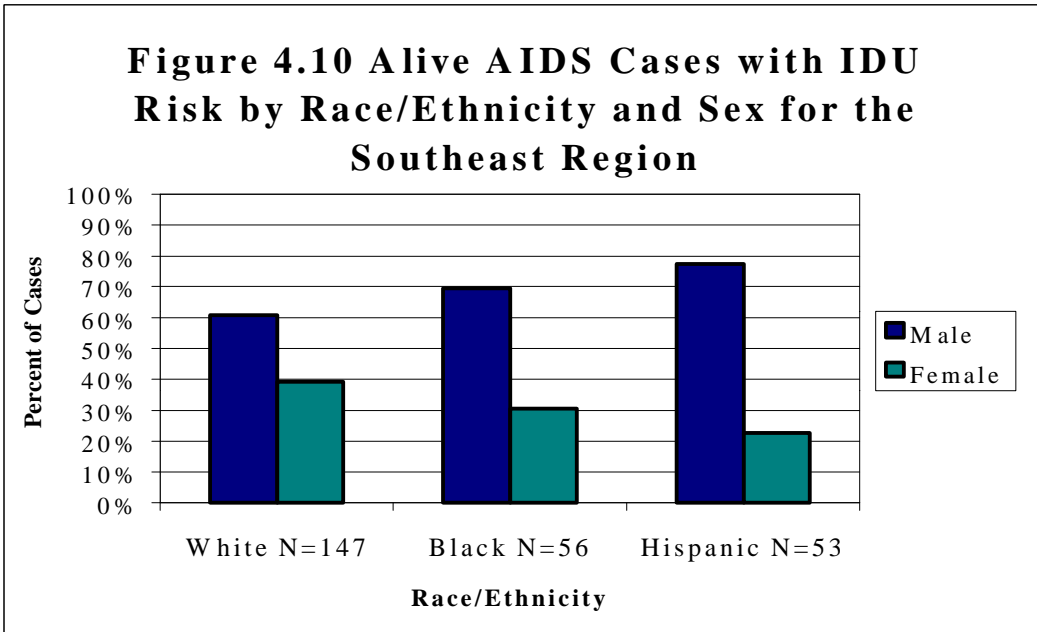


Figure 4.9 Alive AIDS Cases with IDU Risk by Race/Ethnicity and Sex for the Metro West Region





Data from the unlinked HIV serosurveys (including repeat visits) conducted at three (out of a total of twenty) private drug treatment centers (DTC) in Massachusetts offering methadone maintenance or detoxification services, are shown in Figure 4.11. Data from the DTC sites provides a selective view of the seropositivity among individuals who enter treatment at these sites. The sites vary considerably with respect to race and in terms of the communities they serve. Clinic A, for example, serves largely people of color (74%), 84% of whom are Hispanic. Clinics B and C, on the other hand, serve mostly White clients, 76% and 69%, respectively. Annual seropositivity rates decreased through 1993 and have remained relatively stable since.

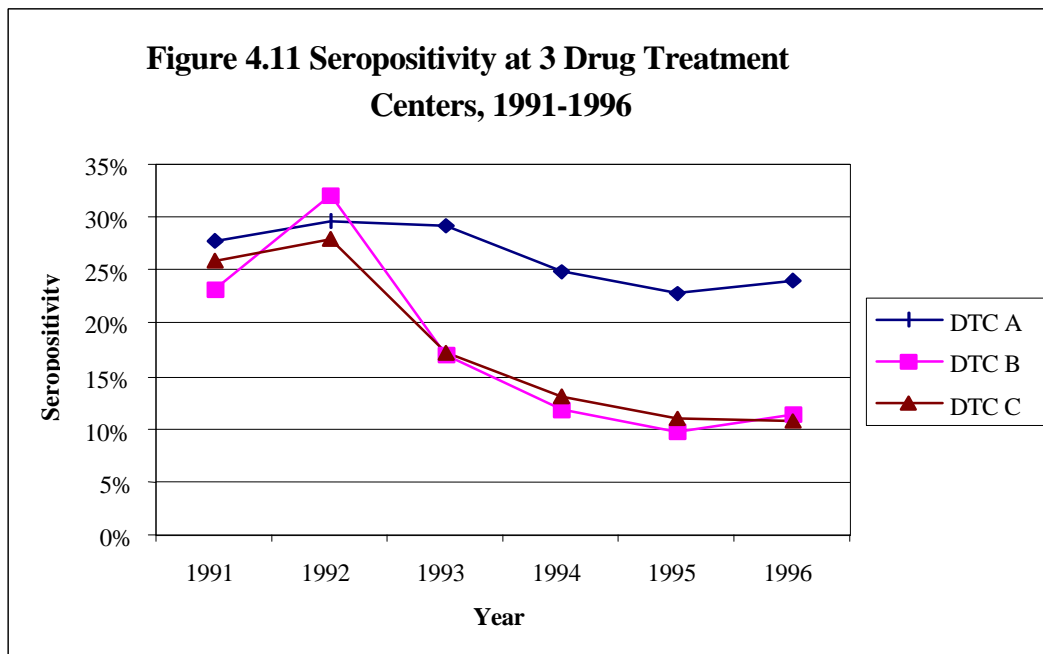
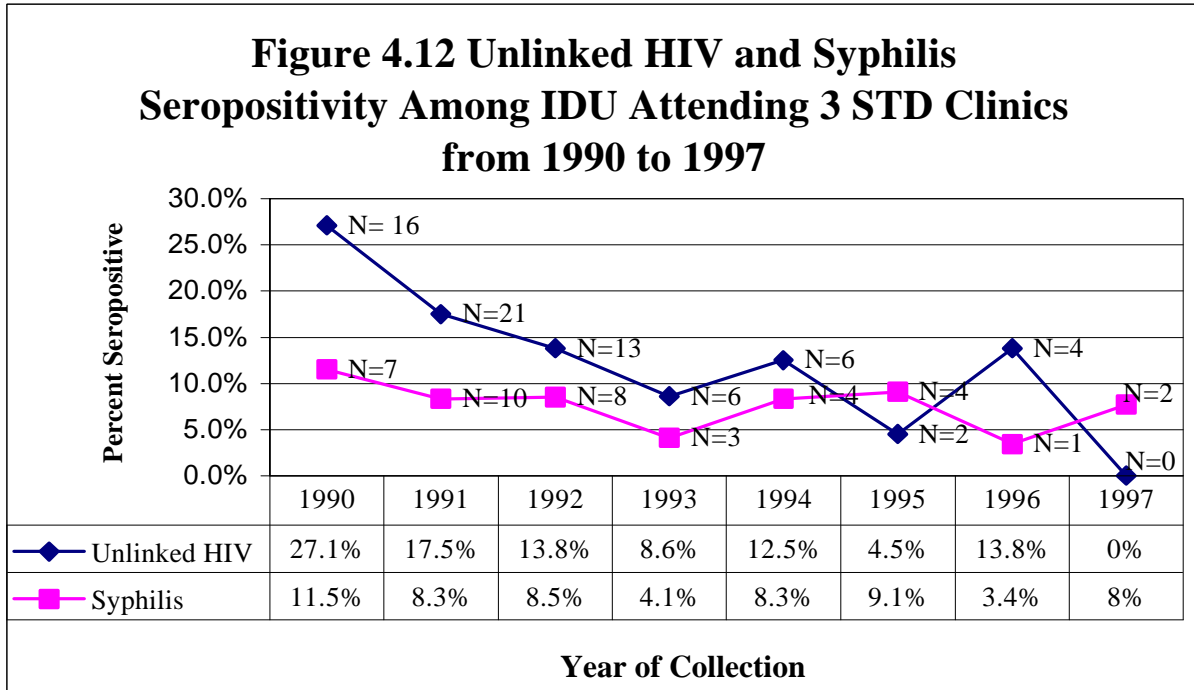


Figure 4.12 presents HIV and syphilis seropositivity among injection drug users who attended three STD clinics. A cautious interpretation of this data is warranted as small numbers can create significant fluctuation in percents from year to year.



A serosurvey conducted in New Bedford from November 1997 to January 1998 among out of treatment injection drug users offers additional information. The sample recruited (N=200) was almost evenly distributed by gender (45% female, 55% male), although not as evenly distributed by race/ethnicity (68% White, 8% Black, and 13% Hispanic). The seroprevalence of the participants was 26%. The seroprevalence rates varied quite dramatically by race/ethnicity. Whites in the sample had a seroprevalence rate of 20%, while the seroprevalence rates for Blacks and Hispanics were 62% and 41%, respectively.

Data from state-funded counseling and testing sites (Figure 4.13) show an increase in the number of injection drug users in Massachusetts accessing Counseling and Testing services. These data reflect the trends seen with AIDS surveillance data; as the number of AIDS cases rises among women and Hispanics, so do their number and percentage at Counseling and Testing sites.

However, White men still make up the largest share of injecting drug users who present for testing at these sites.

Figure 4.13 Changes in the Demographic Profile of IDU Clients of Counseling and Testing Sites in Massachusetts in 1992 and 1997

		N and % of Total Tested	
		1992 (N=2,528)	1997 (N=4,395)
Sex	Male	1,701 (67%)	2,717 (63%)
	Female	801 (32%)	1,638 (37%)
Race/Ethnicity	White	1,870 (74%)	2,716 (62%)
	Black	256 (10%)	394 (9%)
	Hispanic	323 (13%)	884 (20%)
	Other	61 (2%)	401 (9%)
Age	20-29	707 (28%)	1,188 (27%)
	30-39	1,297 (51%)	1,852 (42%)
	40+	445 (18%)	1,149 (26%)

Figure 4.14 illustrates that injecting drug users are more likely to engage in multiple risk behaviors in addition to their injection drug use than are non-injecting drug users. In other words, injection drug users are not solely at risk for HIV infection from their injection drug use. This is an important consideration in the planning of prevention services.

Figure 4.14 Testing and Risk Behaviors by IDU vs. non-IDU C&T Clients, 1997

Risk Behaviors	IDUs (% of Total IDUs)	Non-IDUs (% of Total Non-IDUs)
	N=4,395	N=26,194
Sex w/ Person w/HIV/AIDS	710 (16%)	1,771 (7%)
MSM	70 (2%)	2,110 (8%)
Sex w/Multiple Partners	3,303 (75%)	15,565 (59%)
Sex w/person with Multiple Partners	3,333 (76%)	16,919 (65%)
Sex w/ Prostitute	961 (22%)	1,523 (6%)
Exchanged Sex for Drugs/Money	977 (22%)	843 (3%)
Sex w/IDU	2,726 (62%)	2,462 (9%)
History of Sexual Assault	646 (15%)	1,933 (7%)